

320 SCOTT AVENUE (HOUSE)
320 Scott Avenue
Glenshaw
Allegheny County
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6779
PA-6779

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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320 SCOTT AVENUE (HOUSE)

HABS No. PA-6779

Location: 320 Scott Avenue, Glenshaw, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Significance: Constructed in 1969-70, 320 Scott Avenue is a representative example of suburban residential design at the end of the post-World War II housing boom. Although described at the time as a “two-story colonial,” beyond regularized openings, multi-pane, double-hung windows, ornamental shutters, and a “six-panel” front door, the house bears little resemblance to its eighteenth-century ancestors. Like a majority of its immediate contemporaries and postwar predecessors, no architect was directly involved in the house’s design and construction. Rather, the house grew out of a collaborative process whereby a now forgotten designer was contracted by the builder to create a general prototype, which in turn was altered by the clients to suit their specific needs and desires. Because of this three-part, decidedly non-integrated process, the dwelling’s exterior massing and organization of window and door openings extend more from decisions made about interior room arrangement and overall plan than from any unified aesthetic scheme. With four bedrooms, two-and-one-half bathrooms, a two-car garage, centralized circulation, and a fully developed two-zone “active” and “quiet” arrangement for public and semipublic rooms, 320 Scott Avenue included the domestic spaces and amenities that, during the quarter century following World War II, moved from optional luxuries to increasingly standard features in new suburban houses.

Historian: James A. Jacobs, HABS

Description:

Exterior

Located on the north side of Scott Avenue between Herron Lane and Phillips Avenue, 320 Scott Avenue fronts onto a moderately busy, two-lane suburban road. The building is comprised of a two-story main block with a single story wing (original) positioned on one side having a footprint of approximately 42' x 28'. The main block drops to three full stories at the front in order to accommodate access to a two-car garage on the basement level. The house’s exterior walls are veneered “to grade” with rose colored bricks laid up in American running bond, except for the second floor at the rear, which overhangs the first-floor wall plane by 2'-0" and is sheathed in white aluminum siding. The main block is surmounted by a very low-pitched hip roof and the wing is topped by a similar three-sided, or perhaps “half” a hip, roof; both sections are covered in black asphalt shingles. A brick chimney extends well above the wing’s roofline and is located at the center of the otherwise featureless west facing wall.

The principal (south) elevation's window and door openings are somewhat irregularly placed, and although balanced on the facade as a whole, they cannot be discussed in terms of vertical bays. The four small windows on the second floor are evenly, though not symmetrically spaced, and are filled with eight-over-eight, double-hung aluminum sash. On the first-floor a solid black steel door with applied wood molding suggesting six panels is positioned on the left side of the main block, or approximately in the middle of the entire first-floor wall when including the wing. This door is flanked by three large, double-hung eight-over-eight aluminum-framed windows. The one to the left of the door stands alone and the two to the right occupy a single opening in the brick wall. All of the window and door openings on the principal facade are flanked by black, purely ornamental shutters, which along with the muntin divisions in the windows and the front door "panels" are the only exterior elements having any tenuous affinity with colonial predecessors.

On the basement level, the single solid double-car garage door neither corresponds with the double window above nor even its own off-center light fixture. To the immediate left of the garage door is an east-facing standard door with three fixed lights opening onto a "mudroom" located under the front porch. This porch is reached via two sets of concrete stairs connected by an L-shaped concrete walk. The stairs extending up from the concrete driveway are flanked by random-coursed, ashlar-cut rusticated limestone retaining walls. The stoop is enclosed with an ornamental iron balustrade that alternates square and twisted balusters.

The rear (north) elevation contains three six-over-six, aluminum double-hung windows on the second-floor. As on the front, these openings do not correspond in vertical bays with the three double-hung window openings below; rather, they are arranged with the smaller, six-over-six unit flanked by two larger eight-over-eight units, all positioned within the main block. A sliding glass door is situated in the wing and opens onto a small stoop with stairs descending to a concrete patio extending the house's full width. The east elevation's wall plane, increasing from two to three stories from back to front, is relieved only by a single double-hung window on the second floor and a small glass block window lighting the garage. This fixed window type is replicated twice on the west elevation in the basement level with one in the gameroom area and one in the laundry-utility-storage area.

Interior

The first-floor plan radiates outward from an entryway bearing a guest closet and partially open staircase up to the second floor. Opening from the entryway's right is a large living room and to the left, at the foot of the stair, is a standard door into the family room. Extending toward to the back of the house from the entryway is a short passage containing a half bathroom that terminates with a plaster cased opening dividing the passage from the casual eating area or "dINETTE" at the house's rear. In this spot, one of two possible circuits can be made. Moving to the left through a cased opening, one encounters a paneled family room running the full depth of the house and encompassing all of the interior space contained within the one-story wing. At the front of this room, one can re-access the entryway. To the left of the dINETTE stands the kitchen proper, open to the casual table area, but still screened by means of a cabinet peninsula. Beyond the kitchen through a cased opening and still facing the house's rear is a dining room that is linked to the front-facing living room by a wide plaster cased opening.

A straight run of stairs connects the first and second floors and is fitted with a short iron balustrade in the entryway and an iron handrail beyond. On the second floor, a jogged hallway extends laterally into the middle of the house at a right angle to the stair. Four bedrooms, two at the front and two at the rear, open onto the hall, which also contains a linen closet and a full bathroom, bearing a toilet, lavatory, and a combination bathtub-shower; this bathroom has no exterior window. The master bedroom, located in the northeast corner, features its own private bathroom containing a toilet, lavatory, and a stall shower, with one rear-facing window. All four bedrooms include a closet with louvered bi-fold doors and with the exception of the bedroom in the northwest corner, all are lighted and ventilated by two windows. A pull down door in the upstairs hall has an integrated folding ladder allowing access to the attic. The attic is also fitted with a large circulating/ventilating fan whose louvers open in the passage ceiling when turned on.

The dinette contains a standard door located between the opening to the entry passage and the family room's doorway, which accesses a straight run of stairs down to the basement. Unlike most basements, even in newer houses, the distance between the floor and floor joists above is a comfortable 9'-0". The basement level is divided approximately in half by a concrete block wall running north-to-south and separating the habitable portion (west) from a two-car garage (east). The western portion is further divided by a paneled stud wall running east-to-west. This wall separates a partially finished "gameroom" at the front from an unfinished laundry-storage-utility area at the rear.

The garage runs unimpeded from the front of the house to the rear and is finished with a "brown coat" plaster ceiling, an insulating and fireproofing measure. One steel I-beam runs east-to-west below the garage's plaster ceiling between the east exterior wall and the interior concrete block wall; a second I-beam extends from a concrete block pier integral with the interior block wall to the west exterior wall. These beams provide the basic structural support for the house. A vertical steel post is fixed near the middle of the west I-beam, and is evident on the house's interior in the form of a built-out square enclosure at the center of the family room's east wall. This post carries a third I-beam running north-to-south, perpendicular to those in the basement. This arrangement was necessary on account of a decision to have the house's exterior as fully bricked as possible. The family room wing's east wall is not load bearing and the steel post and I-beam were required to carry the brick for the second story's west wall.

Common to houses of the period, the interior finishes are decidedly simple. Rectilinear plaster cased openings with no moldings are used for doorways when not fitted with doors. Light hollow core interior doors with no panels, widely known as "birch flush" in period literature, are fitted into frames with architraves of the most minimal type, being a single, concave return and no other embellishment. Except for the entryway, dinette, kitchen, and bathroom floors, which are covered in linoleum, all of the first- and second-story floors are of oak, including the treads of the principal stairs. The upper and lower kitchen cabinets are of cherry, and the countertops are gray Formica. The deep and somewhat narrow family room does not have plaster walls; instead, dark wood paneling sheaths the interior walls. The room also contains the house's single fireplace located in the middle of its long west-facing

wall. The fireplace is constructed of brick with a raised brick hearth and a simple, though elegant, wood mantle. Extending between the fireplace and the rear wall are built-in bookcases set over deeper lower cabinets with sliding doors.

Marble Sills

The single departure from the pared down nature of the interior finishes are the windowsills, which are composed of single slabs of white marble with gray veining. In a peculiar local building practice, marble sills were as standard as hardwood floors and plaster walls in a significant portion of new houses constructed in metropolitan Pittsburgh for middle-income purchasers from the 1930s through the 1960s. Underscoring the pervasiveness of this construction feature are *Pittsburgh Press* ads from early in the postwar period as well as design decisions made by Ryan Homes, a large merchant-building company founded and originally based in Pittsburgh.

A 1947 ad for “distinctive residences” priced between \$16,000 and \$22,500 and located in “Rolling Hills,” a subdivision in north suburban Pittsburgh, touted: “nothing but Italian marble sills.”¹ Marble sills, however, were not only limited to new, mid-range or upper-bracket dwellings. A 1949 ad for another northern subdivision, “Elfinwild Manor,” situated a short drive from Rolling Hills featured modest one-and-one-half story (“Cape Cod”) houses.² Priced between \$9,750 and \$10,000, these dwellings contained only four finished rooms with expansion possibilities on the upper half story. Although modest in presence and floor plan, they were still furnished with standard marble sills.

Even large postwar merchant builders like Ryan Homes offered marble sills in somewhat less expensive development houses at least through the end of the 1960s.³ Despite common inclusion of marble sills, unlike the aforementioned ads from earlier in the period, Ryan Homes rarely noted their presence in newspaper advertisements, perhaps an indication of their widespread and even expected availability in new houses for middle-income Pittsburghers by the 1960s.⁴ The source of this tradition is not verifiably known, although

¹ Advertisement, “Nearly Ready—for Families Able to Enjoy Fine Living,” *Pittsburgh Press* 17 Aug. 1947: 40. In some cases early on, more expensive imported marbles were used for the public areas of houses with lesser quality marbles for the bedrooms and bathrooms; however, most postwar houses used a single type of marble, often the white and gray variety used in the Jacobs House.

² Advertisement, “\$7350 to be Returned to 32 New Home Owners in Elfinwild Manor, Mt. Royal Blvd. District—Glenshaw,” *Pittsburgh Press* 19 Jun. 1949: 48.

³ Ryan Homes Quality Check List, 19 March 1963, included marble sills among items on a list of standard features, Ryan Homes Collection, Architecture Archives, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

⁴ A March 1967 Ryan Homes memo generated in response to a request to create an economy version of an already modest split-entry model offered omission of marble sills among the “cuts,” suggesting that even among Ryan Home’s most modest development houses marble sills were still widespread, if not standard. Memorandum “36 Ft. Split Entry”, Jack Schweiger to E. J. Moritz, Bob O’Neil, Lou Meassick, 2 March 1967, Architectural Committee Papers, 1966–1967, Ryan Homes Collection, Architecture Archives, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

discussions with a few builders suggest that skilled Italian masons, making up a significant percentage of the postwar house building trade, encouraged this seemingly expensive flourish in otherwise simply outfitted houses.

History:

The Land: Lot No. 201, New Glen Manor Plan 2

On August 14, 1969, Albert and Barbara Jacobs lodged a disclosure statement with their intended lending institution affirming that the \$20,000 loan for which they were applying would be used for the construction of “a Two story brick and aluminum dwelling on Lot. No. 201, New Glen Manor Plan 2,” to be built by Frank T. Bozzo.⁵ The lending institution approved the loan the following day.⁶ On August 25, 1969, the Jacobses officially purchased Lot No. 201 in the New Glen Manor Plan 2 from Anne E. Newkirk Pascoe and her husband Frank T. Pascoe, a total of one-third of an acre for \$7,000.⁷ The Jacobses had relocated to the Pittsburgh area from California the preceding June, and were temporarily residing in a nearby town with Albert’s parents while they searched for existing houses.⁸ He had recently been hired by the Shaler Township school district to teach in the intermediate school located on Scott Avenue in Glenshaw. Albert discovered two lots facing Scott Avenue while traveling to the school and by mid-July the couple had decided to build a new house instead of purchasing an existing one.⁹

Located six miles from downtown Pittsburgh, Glenshaw was founded as a Victorian railroad suburb. It enjoyed modest, though persistent, expansion as a semi-rural automobile suburb during the 1920s and 1930s, which foreshadowed Glenshaw’s even more intensive development as a middle-income suburb in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.¹⁰ Lot No. 201 was one of three subdivided within a larger parcel situated at the northwest corner of Scott and Phillips avenues. “New Glen Manor Plan 2” was not a “plan” name as commonly employed for marketing purposes and aimed at creating exclusivity around new housing developments. Rather, the owners invented it for formalistic, process-related reasons as stipulated by the

⁵ Albert B. Jacobs and Barbara J. Jacobs, “Mellon National Bank and Trust Company, Disclosure Statement—Mortgage Loans,” 14 Aug. 1969, Jacobs family papers, Ross Township, Pennsylvania.

⁶ Charles P. Mitchell, Manager, Mt. Royal Office, Mellon National Bank and Trust Company to Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Jacobs, 15 Aug. 1969, Jacobs family papers, Ross Township, Pennsylvania.

⁷ Deed, Ann E. Newkirk Pascoe and Frank T. Pascoe to Albert B. Jacobs and Barbara J. Jacobs, 25 Aug. 1969, number 41175, deed book volume 4772, 489, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, copy in the Jacobs family papers, Ross Township, Pennsylvania.

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all information related to the chronology of personal events, decisions made in regard to the lot and house, and construction were drawn from Albert and Barbara Jacobs, personal interview, 15 Feb. 2002.

⁹ Initially, the Jacobses offered to buy #201 for \$7000 and the adjacent lot for \$5000, but the Pascoes declined the offer.

¹⁰ Glenshaw is not an independent political entity. It one of a number of communities making up Shaler Township.

township and the name designated a legal land subdivision in the most general terms. Indeed, the Jacobses, their later next door neighbors, and another family who purchased a lot directly across the street and also had a house constructed by Frank T. Bozzo all indicated that they purchased their lots in part because they were situated in an established, visually diverse neighborhood with larger than average building sites. The neighborhood included houses mostly constructed from the 1920s onward, and all three neighboring households clearly stated that they had held no interest in purchasing a new house in a single builder “development.”¹¹ The final legal divisions for New Glen Manor Plan 2 located the Newkirk-Pascoe’s 1920s house on a large corner lot, with one adjacent lot facing Phillips Avenue, and two fronting on Scott Avenue (fig. 1).

The Builder: Bozzo Sr. to Bozzo Jr., A Shift in Outlook and Business Practices

When the Jacobses, and later the Sybos, purchased their Scott Avenue parcels, the Newkirk-Pascoes attached a rider to the land transaction requiring that they contract with Frank T. Bozzo for the construction of their new houses. In 1945, Frank T. Bozzo, Sr., a carpenter by training, founded a residential construction business centered in Glenshaw, creating small one- and two-story houses typical of the early postwar period.¹² In doing so, Bozzo Sr., joined the ranks of enterprising builders, large-volume and small, who contributed to the unprecedented levels of suburban expansion in the decades following World War II. Between 1947 and 1968, active residential builders in the United States increased by about 25,000, from 75,000 to 100,000.¹³ Constructing between fifteen and twenty houses per year between 1945 and 1963, Bozzo Sr., fell into a category defined in 1954 by industry leaders as a “medium builder.”¹⁴ In that year, medium builders—who were described as individuals and businesses constructing between ten and twenty-four houses annually—comprised six percent of all builders and were responsible for thirteen percent of new units built in the country.¹⁵

The term “medium builder” provides only a generic, quantitative characterization of Bozzo Sr.’s business, and a further qualitative elaboration is necessary to fully comprehend decisions later made by Bozzo Jr. in the 1960s. In a departure from earlier business patterns, the years immediately following World War II saw fewer and fewer builders constructing houses “to order,” in large part because of efforts to help control costs through

¹¹ Shirley Robick, personal interview, 16 Feb. 2002; Dolores and Pamela Sybo, personal interview, 16 Feb. 2002.

¹² Frank T. Bozzo, personal interview, 17 Feb. 2002. Unless otherwise noted, all information related to the Bozzos’ construction activities is drawn from this interview.

¹³ “WHO Are the Postwar Builders?” *American Builder* 69 (Aug. 1947): 126, for 75,000; “Ryan Second Biggest in the U. S.,” *Pittsburgh Press* 22 Sep. 1968, sec. 7: 1, for 100,000.

¹⁴ Leonard G. Haeger, “ ‘Four Kinds of Builders,’ ” *NAHB Correlator* 8 (Mar. 1954): 201.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

standardization.¹⁶ A 1948 *Pittsburgh Press* article observed: “the war put an end to persons building their own homes on contract...since the war most contractors have built homes on speculation, that is, they build a number of homes and [then] sell them.”¹⁷ Whether considering small, medium, or large volume builders, consumers were given very little choice about the plan or the materials used in creating houses, even those built on contract. For nearly a decade, this situation did not hamper sales and it was estimated that in 1956 fewer than fifteen percent of houses nationally were “custom built.”¹⁸ This was the environment in which Bozzo Sr. launched and nurtured his postwar residential construction business. He crafted solid, straightforward houses with few, if any, options beyond the standard, regardless of whether they were built for a specific client or were part of small-scale speculation.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the consuming public was considerably better acquainted with both the house building and buying process, as well as the real and perceived inadequacies of the dwellings constructed earlier in the period. Many people were in the market for their second or third houses and knew exactly what they lacked in their current one and wanted in a new model; these consumers generally could only be encouraged to buy if they felt that they were getting an inherently better product. At the same time, first-time buyers entered the market with noticeably greater expectations in 1965 than in 1945. These expectations became a key impetus for qualitative changes within the postwar building industry after the mid-1950s, regardless of total annual output.

In 1954, the National Association of Home Builders defined a “custom builder” as someone who “builds his product, the house, after sale rather than before sale. He builds his product for a known customer, and the house reflects the customer’s requirements.”¹⁹ This process demanded considerably more sophistication and patience, more interaction with the client, and, distinct from large volume merchant builders, meant that a builder did not market a product so much as a solid reputation and clear capabilities. With fewer houses being “built to order” after the war, custom building came to be characterized as “rarified” and associated with a more individual, better-built, and subsequently more expensive house at a time when large merchant-building companies were dominating the markets in terms of total output.²⁰

¹⁶ For definitions related to the various types of builders in the industry, see Dorothy K. Newman and Adela L. Stucke, *Structure of the Residential Building Industry in 1949, Bulletin No. 1170* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1954), Appendix B; National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), *Housing Almanac: A Fact File of the Home Building Industry* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Home Builders, 1957), 15-16.

¹⁷ William K. Trosene, “More People Show Desire for Custom-Built Houses,” *Pittsburgh Press* 5 Sep. 1948: 35.

¹⁸ “The Shelter Magazines Know that, More and More... People No Longer Build Houses... They Buy Them,” *House & Home* 10 (Sep. 1956): 155.

¹⁹ Haeger, “Four Kinds of Builder,” 200.

²⁰ A 1954 NAHB survey of their builder-members found that “large” builders, those constructing fifty or more houses annually, made up less than 3 percent of the total yet accounted for about 44 percent of all units constructed. See Haeger, “Four Kinds of Builder,” 201. A NAHB survey of builder-members in 1964 found

As houses grew increasingly more expensive, a prospective buyer “in the \$25,000 to \$30,000 price range expects to make changes, particularly if he’s bought [on contract] from a model.”²¹ This situation resulted in two changes. First, large-volume merchant builders, for example Ryan Homes, who previously disdained or even forbade making even one change to a development house were forced to “customize” houses by offering a list of standard options for their models. Second, small- and medium-volume builders, who retained more traditional planning and construction methods abandoned after World War II, found market appeal by occupying a position floating somewhere between an architect-designed house and one purchased already constructed in a subdivision. It is within this clearly market-driven, but still variable and even vague, reorientation of the building industry that Bozzo Jr. redefined the emphasis and direction of his house-building business.

Upon his father’s 1963 death, Bozzo Jr. came into control of the business and consciously repositioned his client and product focus. Where Bozzo Sr. mainly constructed six-room houses aimed at working-class Pittsburghers making their first move out to the suburbs, Bozzo Jr. decided to concentrate on building a smaller number of considerably larger houses targeting first-time middle-class consumers or second- or third-time homeowners. In keeping with overall shifts in perceptions of and expectations for new housing, he based this decision on the belief that by the early 1960s suburban Americans had moved well beyond a “house-as-shelter” conception that characterized the early postwar period to a notion centered on the “house-as-consumer item.” Bozzo sought to create a more enhanced and, hopefully, more marketable and competitive product.

In making this change, Bozzo Jr. hired a “designer,” not an architect, to generate generic prototypes based on popular ideas about domestic space. By the time that the Jacobses were deciding on a model, he was providing clients with four options: a split-entry, a split-level, a one-and-one-half story, and a two-story.²² Bozzo’s prototypical houses moved from a standard six rooms, to seven or eight rooms, and from one or one-and-one-half baths, to two or two-and-one-half baths. In 1965, he purchased a number of lots along Phillips Avenue in Glenshaw, and began to build these larger houses, including his own. Although like his father before him, Bozzo Jr. could still be quantitatively considered a “medium builder,” the business’s elements and methods repositioned him qualitatively as a “custom builder.” He maintained a degree of control by offering a narrowed number of prototypes, but Bozzo’s clients were allowed to make any change they wanted to a chosen prototype, from room location to overall dimensions to materials, so long as they agreed to pay for the time related to reworking the construction drawings as well as additional or substituted materials. This collaborative process and the level of communication between the prototype designer,

that while their 10,000 “small” builder-members constructed 16 percent of all residential units in that year, they accounted for 50 percent of all units priced at \$35,000 and above. For additional information about small builder practices in 1964, see Norman Farquhar, “The Small Builder: A Statistical Profile,” *NAHB Journal of Homebuilding* 19 (Oct. 1965): 50.

²¹ “Why a Buyer’s Market Is Forcing Builders to Customize,” *American Builder* 100 (Oct. 1967): 44.

²² Albert and Barbara Jacobs, personal interview, 15 Feb. 2002, for four prototypes.

builder, and ultimately the client, characterizes how the superficially simple builder-client relationship of the early postwar period had grown in complexity by the later postwar period.

The Design: Customizing the Two-story Prototype

At some point prior to 1968-1969, Bozzo Jr. had convinced his neighbors, the Newkirk-Pascoes, to attach the rider to their planned lot sales, although whether this was only an extension of friendly personal relations or the product of some now forgotten transaction is not known. On August 25, 1969, the same day on which the Jacobses purchased Lot No. 201 from the Newkirk-Pascoes, they also signed a construction loan agreement with Mellon National Bank and Trust Company.²³ Earlier in the month, the Jacobses had selected Bozzo's largest prototype, a two-story model with a base price tag of approximately \$28,000, with final cost coming to \$29,700 after making various changes to suit their individual needs and desires. The loan agreement stipulated that they place a \$9,700 down payment in order to meet the requirements for the loan, and provided the couple with an outline of the seven stages in the construction upon which the bank would make payments of varying amounts to Bozzo.²⁴ Sometime shortly after August 25, 1969, Frank T. Bozzo's construction company broke ground for Albert and Barbara Jacobs' new house. Aside from financial concerns, there had already been a great deal of interaction between the Jacobses and Bozzo in selecting and fine-tuning the house that they desired for their burgeoning family. A process that would be repeated within a year using the same prototype as the Sybo and Robick families purchased lots adjacent to and across the street from the Jacobses.

Of the four houses built from the same prototype—on the three vacant lots in the New Glen Manor Plan No. 2 subdivision and a fourth lot on Scott Avenue across from the Jacobs and Sybo houses—the Jacobses departed most significantly from the generic model. Although no surviving drawings of the prototype exist, interviews, original blueprints of 317, 318, and 320 Scott Avenue, and discernible physical characteristics of the three Scott Avenue houses by Bozzo and the one located at 2709 Phillips Avenue, planned and built just before that at 320 Scott Avenue, provide clues as to what form and plan the generic model took. It contained two stories with a one-story wing located to the right of the front door; both the two-story and one-story portions were topped by low-pitched side-facing gable roofs. The wing extended forward, roughly five feet beyond the wall plane of the two-story portion. Extension of the front portion of the wing's roof back across the main block resulted in a covered porch for the principal entry. The first-floor walls and those visible at the basement level were veneered in brick, while the second-story walls, overhanging the first floor at the front and back by about two feet in both directions, were sheathed in aluminum siding. On the interior, the first floor included an entry with powder room, living room, dining room, and kitchen and casual eating area in the main block, with a family room featuring a fireplace located in the wing. The second floor included four bedrooms and two bathrooms. After deciding on this particular model, the Jacobses sorted through their individualized needs,

²³ Construction Loan Agreement between Albert B. Jacobs and Barbara J. Jacobs and the Mellon National Bank and Trust Company, 25 Aug. 1969, Jacobs family papers, Ross Township, Pennsylvania.

²⁴ Ibid.

wants, and broader expectations during the customization process in which they discussed with Bozzo whether application of their changes was feasible.

While still in California, the Jacobses had purchased house plan catalogues and “dreamed” of building a house falling into a vague expressive category of “French Provincial.” Although published more than a decade after the completion of their house, a plan catalogue similar to those that would have been available to the Jacobses described a model featured in a section entitled “Formal French Facades for Gracious Living,” stating: “the romance of the French Provincial is captured here by the hip-roof masses, the charm of the window detailing, the brick quoins at the corners, [and] the delicate dentil work of the cornices.”²⁵ This passage gives some indication of what their idealized house would *look* like, but, of course the couple also had notions about the types of rooms and amenities contained within.

By the time they were poised to select from Bozzo’s prototypes, the Jacobses had created a wish list of rooms and features that included a house having: two stories, a big kitchen with casual eating space, a second living area, a fireplace, at least two full bathrooms, a full basement, and a two-car garage. In desiring domestic spaces and features like these, the Jacobses were not unlike thousands of other families looking to buy or build new houses at the end of the 1960s. An article in a 1967 issue of *American Builder*, entitled “Profile: The 1967 Home Buyer,” recorded two-stories, a double garage, a fireplace, and a “family room near or adjacent to the kitchen” among key features 10,000 families wanted in their next house.²⁶ With these visual and spatial preconceptions, the Jacobses and Bozzo Jr. worked to make them as much a reality as possible.

The initial set of customized drawings, completed by “Don Z” on July 25, 1969, provide understanding of the initial, but still not final, product as worked out by the Jacobses and their builder (figs. 2, 3, and 4). The first problem that the couple encountered with regard to their builder was a desire for “French Provincial” expression. In recounting their initial conversation with Bozzo, Barbara Jacobs simply remarked: “Frank didn’t have a clue.” Ironically, a two-story house constructed by another builder a few years before and located directly across the street from their lot displayed many of the French Provincial mode’s characterizing elements: large hip roof, brick quoins, a denticulated cornice. In an attempt to incorporate at least one element that they liked about French Provincial domestic design into their new house, the Jacobses exchanged the Bozzo prototype’s side-gable roof form for a hip roof.

The second departure from the prototype involved the exterior cladding: they wanted an all-brick house. This presented some significant problems. Brick veneer walls were heavy and would not allow for overhanging the second story. Because the bedrooms were positioned above only a portion of the relatively expansive first floor plan, removing the overhangs significantly impinged on an ability to have four bedrooms and two full bathrooms on the

²⁵ Home Planners, Inc., *210 Home Plans: One Story Designs* (Farmington Hills, MI: Home Planners, Inc., 1982), 129.

²⁶ “Profile: The 1967 Home Buyer,” *American Builder* 100 (Mar. 1967): 102.

second floor. Not wanting to reduce the number of bedrooms and unable to afford the added expense of a bedroom constructed over the one-story wing, the Jacobses ultimately compromised on having the rear of the second story still overhang, and be the only non-brick section of exterior wall, while enjoying a flush, uninterrupted brick wall plane at front. Apparently having the front wall entirely in one plane became a general goal because they also decided to push the prototype's family room wing back in line with the two-story block, eliminating the sheltered front door and integrated covered porch at the rear. Because the family room now extended the full depth of the house, in order to avoid a tunnel-like appearance the wing's width was extended by two feet.

Another problematic issue related to having an "all brick" exterior for the house concerned the west-facing second-story wall located above the one-story family room wing.²⁷ Because the (interior) first-floor wall was not load-bearing, to sheath the (exterior) second-story portion in brick required an additional steel I-beam carried on a vertical steel post sitting on one of the foundation I-beams. In the end, the changes related to having an "all brick house," the overall enlargement of the family room wing, the extra brick, and a steel post and an additional I-beam enlarged the house's cost by \$1,200, or roughly four percent more than the base value of the prototype.

The third major change to the prototype involved the second-story bathrooms. In the other three houses built from this prototype, one full bathroom was positioned in the hallway at the top of the stairs, with a second full bathroom backing up to this one at the rear of the house in the master bedroom. It is probable that these were the bathrooms' locations in the prototype. The initial set of personalized drawings incorporating the desired alterations as stipulated by the Jacobses show the bathrooms located back-to-back at the rear, but between the two bedrooms rather than justified to one side. In time, they again reconsidered the bathroom position. The Jacobses felt that their planned master bedroom was not large enough and asked Bozzo to flip the full bathroom to the other side of the hallway, creating a spacious alcove in their own bedroom. Because detailed construction drawings had already been completed and the bathroom's movement required longer utility runs, this plan change cost them \$500, or a little less than two percent of the house's base value.²⁸

A few other aspects of the planned house depart from the finished product. After the Jacobses decided where on the lot they wanted the house positioned, drainage issues required that the entire structure be "flipped" around, so that the one-story wing stood to the left rather than the right of the main block. A minor structural, but somewhat visually aggravating, alteration pushed the two living room windows into one opening, centered on the room's interior wall rather than at any logical position on the exterior wall. Finally, a sliding glass

²⁷ The initial set of customized drawings dated 25 July 1969 depict the house with a fully bricked front, but side elevations (east and west) whose second stories were still to be sheathed in aluminum siding. The decision to use brick on these walls, and the subsequent and complex structural decisions related to the west wall in particular, was indicated on this set of blueprints as the steel post adjacent to the family room's east (interior) wall is penciled in on the first-floor plan.

²⁸ This bathroom relocation is one of the changes penciled in on the 25 July 1969 set of blueprints.

door was inserted in the family room's rear wall, instead of a double-hung window as at the front.²⁹

Construction, Completion, and Reception: 1969-1970

Work began on digging the foundations late in August 1969, and for the most part construction progressed smoothly. The Jacobses chose to have the house pushed as far forward on the site as they could, so that the rear yard would be as large as possible. None of the mature oak and maple trees on the site were removed in the process. Albert and his father visited the site daily to oversee the construction, an easy endeavor as he began teaching at the school down the street that autumn. Barbara had very little to do with the house beyond the initial selection, changes to the plan, and an occasional trip out to the site on weekends; even the electrical and bathroom fixtures were chosen by Jacobs Jr. and Sr. The Jacobses hired a cousin install the electrical lines, outlets, sockets, and fixtures, at the standard price outlined by the contract with Bozzo, but with greater numbers of fixtures, better quality lines, and a large circulating fan in the attic. At the time, the telephone company wired houses free of cost during the initial construction. In terms of materials, the Jacobses hired their own contractor to install better-quality floors, specified double-glazed windows, and a larger furnace. Albert Jacobs, Sr. requested that Bozzo use 200 pounds more of nails used for applying the sub-flooring throughout the house so that they would not squeak. Kitchen appliances for the house were not built-in, but monetary allotments were still included in the overall purchase price for their obtainment, as was the case for the kitchen cabinets and countertops, and a vanity in the upstairs hall bathroom. Less expensive hollow-core interior doors and the omission of air conditioning at the time of construction (although still properly venting the house for its later installation) represented the only cost-cutting measures taken in regard to materials.

The construction period should have taken 120 days, and Bozzo initially told the Jacobses that they would be in their house by Christmas 1969. They moved in a month late, although the house was finished enough by the holiday for Barbara Jacobs's parents and brother to stay there while visiting. The principal reason for the delay was Bozzo's use of non-union labor on his construction crews, a measure described as an effort to keep client costs lower and assurance that the men would still work in the event of a general trade strike. The downside of this arrangement became evident when the construction crew did not return to work on the Monday after Thanksgiving, instead heading to the mountains for a hunting expedition. Further delays also occurred relative to the Christmas and New Year's holidays. The Jacobses moved into the house on January 19, 1970.

The house built by Frank T. Bozzo for Albert and Barbara Jacobs and their young family in 1969-70 was well-above average when considering new houses constructed across the country in that year. Of the 811,000 single-family houses built by individuals and construction companies in 1969, the average square footage contained within them stood at

²⁹ Replacing this rear window with a sliding glass door was also indicated in pencil on the 25 July 1969 blueprints.

1,605.³⁰ At 2,200 square feet of enclosed living space, the Jacobs' house stood among the top third in size for all houses built. Their dwelling included four bedrooms at a time when twenty-six percent of houses included them, as opposed to the three bedrooms contained in sixty-one percent of new houses. With two full and one half-bathroom, the house stood in the top fifth of new houses. As with thirty-nine percent of other new houses, their dwelling contained a fireplace, and was among forty-nine percent featuring a two-car garage.

It should come as no surprise, then, that reactions to this new house by friends and family were largely favorable. In their interview, the Jacobses remarked that the decision not to settle in nearby Etna, the industrial borough adjacent to Pittsburgh where Albert grew up, was a socially consequential one for the couple. Careful savings and parental assistance allowed them to jump over the "buying up," equity-based process that most of their contemporaries went through in order to attain this level of housing. For example, the two other families choosing to have Bozzo construct this two-story prototype on Scott Avenue bought-up from smaller, one-story houses purchased new a decade or more earlier.³¹

In the end, both of the couple's sets of parents were pleased with the house, but were also mildly admonishing about it. Albert's mother purportedly remarked "it's too big, you'll never be able to keep it clean." In reference to the expense of furnishing a house of this size, Barbara's father supposedly warned: "you're going to have to fill it with furniture you know," an endeavor that ultimately took seven years. Interestingly, the builder's own reaction at the time of occupancy was disbelief that they would live there permanently, he predicted they would buy up to something bigger or better within ten to fifteen years. The Jacobses felt their house to be both modern and stylish, and, despite the builder's predictions, they intended to stay there permanently to raise an expanding family. When asked: "did you celebrate moving into the house?" The couple replied: "yes, we drank."

Alterations and Additions: 1970 Onward

In January 1970, the house located at 320 Scott Avenue was completed as specified in the builder-client contract made between Frank T. Bozzo and the Jacobses; however, a number of landscaping issues remained unaddressed, in large part because it was the middle of the winter. There was no grass and no landscaping beyond the existing mature trees. Brick pallets served as a walkway between the driveway and the front porch's steps; the driveway itself was "nothing but mud." In the spring of 1970, Bozzo returned to seed the front and rear yards, and put in the concrete slabs for the walk and steps up from the driveway to the front door. Although the building contract stated that he would grade and lay down a gravel driveway, the Jacobses decided to have it paved at that time in concrete, and also installed the first section of a concrete rear patio with the brick and concrete steps up to the family room's sliding glass door.

³⁰ U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Characteristics of New One-family Homes: 1974* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Commerce, 1975), for all general statistics.

³¹ Shirley Robick, personal interview, 16 Feb. 2002; Dolores and Pamela Sybo, personal interview, 16 Feb. 2002

The following year, the remaining sections of the concrete patio were laid, extending it fully across the back of the house. At the same time, Albert Jacobs and members of his family built what might be generically termed an “outbuilding” at the rear of the property. The “little house,” as it came to be known, consisted of a standard stud or balloon frame set on an unheated slab-on-grade foundation. The structure was fully veneered in Belgian block, obtained when the nearby borough of Etna decided to pull up the material from one of its streets. On the interior, a single room was lighted by four double-hung windows and featured a wood-burning Belgian block fireplace, lined in firebrick, with a raised hearth and the names of the people involved in its construction carved into the mortar between the blocks. The structure was initially electrified through a branch line extending from the house’s kitchen.³² The date and names of the three oldest Jacobs children, “John,” “Kathy,” and “Beth,” were carved into the exterior concrete door threshold.

With the completion of another house by Bozzo next door, the year 1971 also saw some significant changes made to the front landscaping. Choosing the same prototype as the Jacobses, the Sybos house maintained the planned orientation, and the two houses mirrored each another. The 3’ to 4’ of excavation required for access to the basement-level garages left a 20’ deep strip of raised land between the two drives. The households agreed to share the cost of cutting the hump down to the level of the driveways, a decision that resulted in the loss of one mature tree.

The last major landscape change made to the property at 320 Scott Avenue occurred in 1975. Although the hump had been removed to the right of the drive, the front yard descending away from the house toward street level on the left met the driveway at an awkward angle. The Jacobses decided to install a retaining wall with planting beds, as well as a more substantial staircase and walkway up from the driveway to front porch’s stairs. They hired Italian stone mason Vic Celento to create a dry-laid wall composed of ashlar courses of rusticated limestone blocks. Railroad ties were positioned at the rear of the beds to further accommodate the grade change and define the upper and lower beds of the part adjacent to the front porch. The limestone cost \$180.00, and they paid Celento an additional \$600.00 complete the work on the walls. In the autumn, Albert Jacobs Jr. and Sr. laid the stairs up from the driveway and the L-shaped front walk. The names of the four Jacobs children, “John,” “Kathy,” “Beth,” and “Jamie,” were carved in the section nearest the porch stairs. By the mid-1990s, the juniper planted in the driveway beds threatened the integrity of the wall. The Jacobses removed the overgrown shrubs and hired a mason to take down and recraft the wall, this time using mortared joints.

On the interior, the house has been subject to relatively little change over time. In 1975, the kitchen work area was more fully separated from the dinette by extending a peninsula with upper and lower cabinets out from the rear wall between the two spaces. Early in the 1970s, a carpenter created the carved mantle over the fireplace and the built-in bookcase-cabinets in the family room. In 1977, the front third of the deep family room was partitioned from the

³² The electric lines have since been cut as there was a tendency for the kitchen to short out entirely when anything in the Little House was turned “on.”

rest, an act that provided the family with a small fifth bedroom; an interior door was cut through the entryway wall at the base of the stairs to provide access for this room. In 1994, the Jacobses removed the wall and returned the family room to its original state, and at the same time replaced the original Formica kitchen cabinets with cherry ones. Late in the 1970s, perhaps on account of the reduced size of the family room, the Jacobses partitioned and partially finished the front half of the basement proper for game and television use by the Jacobs children. In the summer 2004, the front door, first- and second-floor windows, and sliding glass door were all replaced. In preparation for the house's sale in the autumn 2004, the roof was replaced.

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Visuals

Bozzo, Frank T. Blueprints for 320 Scott Avenue. 25 July 1969. Author's collection.

Bozzo, Frank T. Blueprints for the Robick House. 1971. Copies in author's collection.

Bozzo, Frank T. Blueprints for the Sybo House. 1971. Copies in author's collection.

Project Information: This history, written in 2004 as Albert and Barbara Jacobs prepared to sell 320 Scott Avenue, was donated in 2010 by James A. Jacobs to the Historic American Buildings Survey. The report includes information about change in postwar houses developed in his doctoral dissertation entitled: “‘You Can’t Dream Yourself A House’: The Evolving Postwar House and Its Preeminent Position within a Renewed Consumer World, 1945-1970” (George Washington University, 2005).

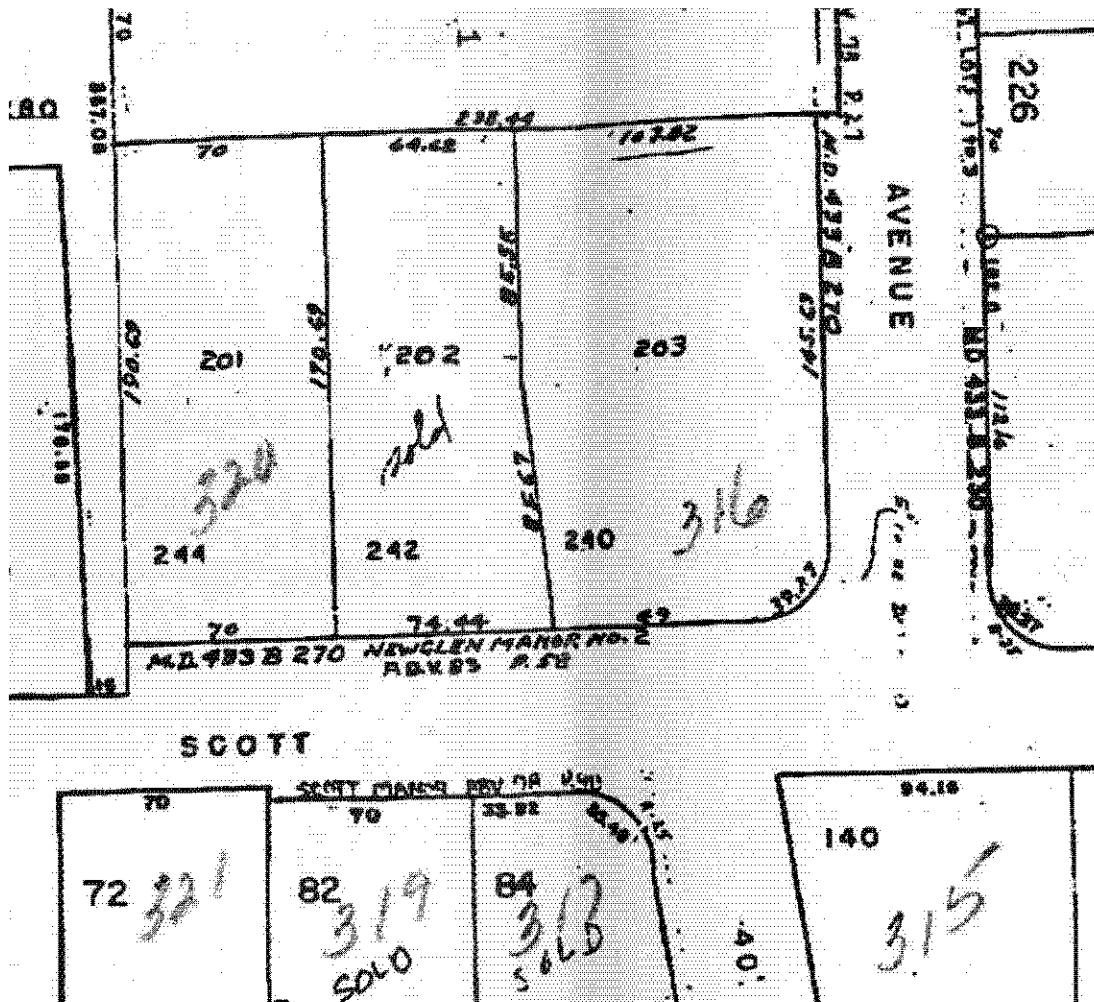


fig. 1. Plat map showing “New Glen Manor No. 2” subdivision, Shaler Township municipal records, Glenshaw, Pennsylvania. This subdivision created lots 201 (320 Scott Avenue), 202 (318 Scott Avenue), and a third lot fronting on an adjacent street (2709 Phillips Avenue, extending horizontally to the north of lots 201, 202, and 203 at the top of this image). Lot 203 (316 Scott Avenue) was the remnant of the original parcel and contains the original house dating from the 1920s. The purchasers of the three lots were required, through a rider in the deed, to use local custom builder Frank T. Bozzo for the construction of any house on the properties. The purchasers of the new lots all chose the same two-story model with individual customizations. Lot 84 (317 Scott Avenue, at the bottom center) was not part of this subdivision, but the purchasers also contracted with Frank Bozzo for their house and chose the same two-story model.



fig. 2. Front (south) elevation, 320 Scott Avenue, 1969. Author's collection. As constructed, the house was flipped with the garage to the right and the one-story wing on the left, and the pair of windows above the garage were pushed together into a single opening.

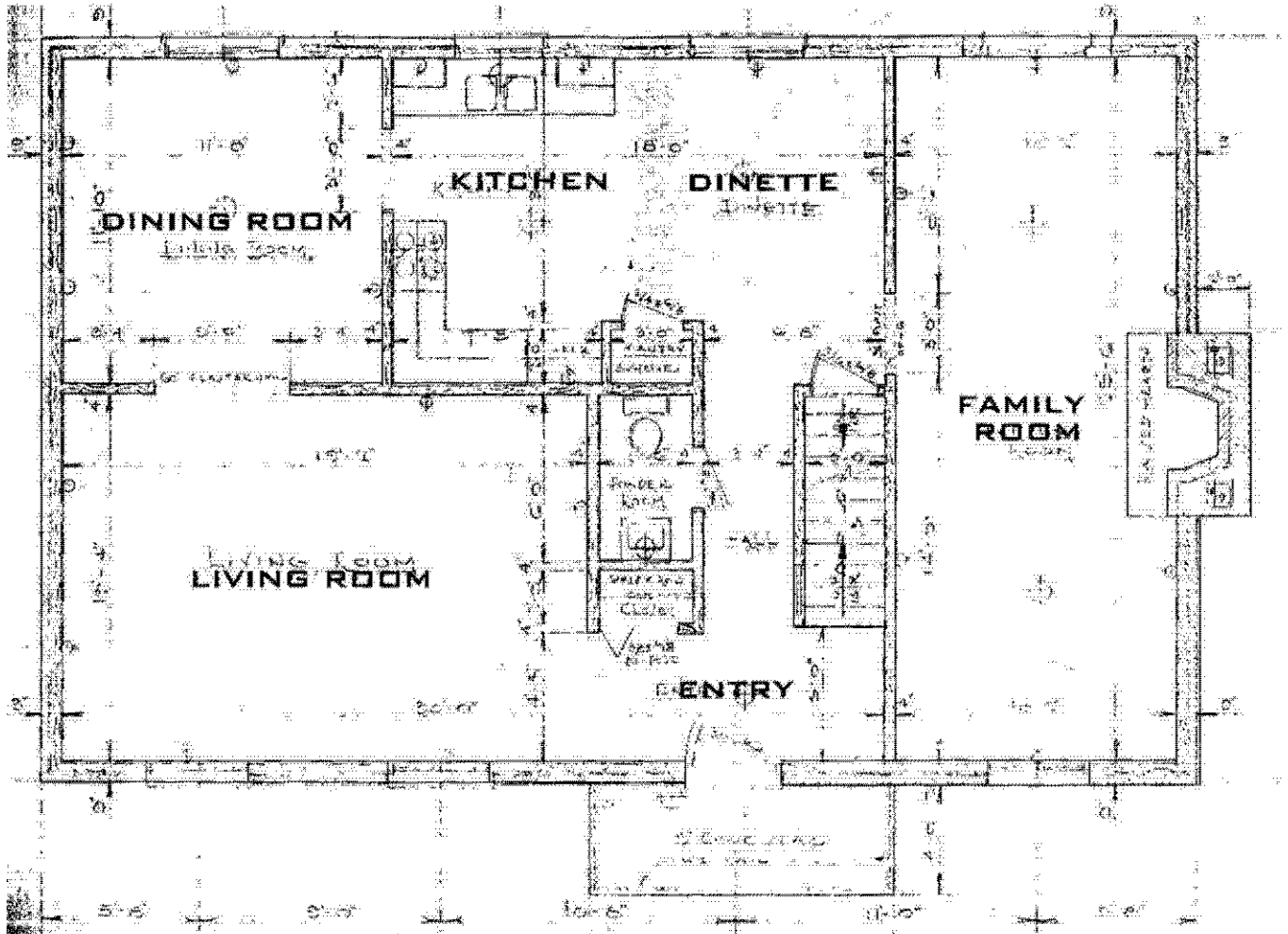


fig. 3. First-floor plan, 320 Scott Avenue, 1969 traced over in 2004. Author's collection. As constructed, the house was flipped with living room on the right and the family room on the left. Within five years of moving into the house, the "dinette" was more fully separated from the kitchen by a cabinet peninsula and built-in bookcases constructed between the fireplace and rear wall of the family room. In 1977, a door was cut through the wall between the entry and the family room at the foot of the stair to provide access to a fifth bedroom created by partitioning off the front third of the family room.

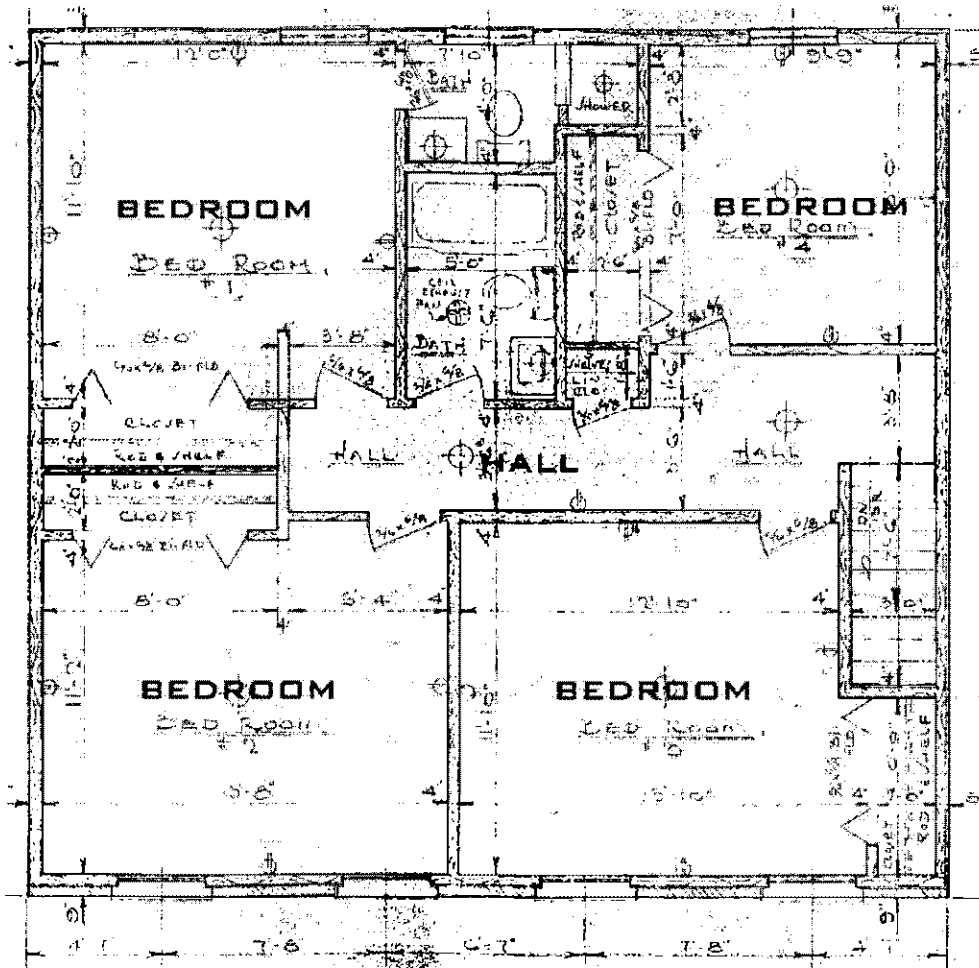


fig. 4. First-floor plan, 320 Scott Avenue, 1969 traced over in 2004. Author's collection. As constructed, the house was flipped with the stair on the left. The bathroom with the tub was also moved across the hall in between the front bedrooms (bottom of image), creating a large alcove in the master bedroom.